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Identical letters dated 29 October 2011 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I write to draw your attention to a very serious escalation of rocket fire from the Gaza Strip, which calls for the immediate attention and action of the international community.

Today major cities throughout southern Israel were bombarded with a barrage of dozens of rockets and mortars launched from the Gaza Strip. These attacks killed one Israeli civilian and injured a number of others. The scenes coming out of southern Israel today should shock and appal the international community and all decent people. There is no question that the terrorists who carried out these attacks intended to deliberately target innocent civilians.

In Ashkelon, a man sitting in his home was murdered when a rocket exploded on top of him. Numerous rockets rained into Ashdod — a major city that is home to more than 200,000 people — injuring one man and causing significant damage to homes. Another rocket hit a school, which fortunately was empty at the time. In Gan Yavne, a suburb of Ashdod, one man was injured as rockets and mortars struck homes and civilian vehicles, setting fires in the streets.

The constant rain or rockets from Gaza leaves scars that are both physical and psychological. Hundreds of thousands of Israeli children will be kept home from school tomorrow to ensure their safety. Dozens of Israelis have been treated for shock. The friends and family of those killed and injured will carry the pain of these attacks forever. No people should have to live under such a spectre of terror. No Government should be expected to sit idly by as its citizens are brutally murdered by terrorists.

Each and every rocket, mortar and missile fired into Israel represents a flagrant violation of international law — and Israel will continue to hold the Hamas terrorist organization fully responsible for all attacks emanating from Gaza, where it remains in de facto control.

Two days ago, I wrote to the Security Council and expressed my Government's concern about the escalating violence emanating from Gaza, alerting the international community about the dangerous potential for civilian casualties. The Council did not utter a single word of condemnation. Today one Israeli civilian was murdered and others lay injured in hospitals this evening as a result of the escalating rocket fire — and we still only hear silence from the Security Council.

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To avoid a further escalation, the Security Council and the international community must take immediate action, unequivocally condemning these acts of terrorism. At this critical moment, all responsible members of the international community have a duty to speak with a common voice and act with a common purpose against the escalating violence flowing from Gaza.

The Palestinian Authority also has a responsibility to immediately condemn these acts of terrorism. As rocket after rocket flies into Israeli schools, homes and hospitals, the silence that continues to echo from President Abbas' compound in Ramallah speaks volumes.

These attacks highlight the pressing need to stem the flow of arms into the Gaza Strip. The terrorist rockets in Gaza are travelling further, their warheads are getting larger and their method of delivery is becoming more sophisticated. This is a direct result of the continuous smuggling of advanced weapons from Iran and others into the area. Preventing this illegal activity is an integral part of Security Council resolution 1860 (2009), but it receives hardly any attention from the international community.

All in our region should hold no illusions. There will be serious consequences for continued rocket fire. Israel has exercised and will continue to exercise its right to self-defence, as appropriate, and will take all necessary measures to protect its citizens.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter distributed as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Ron **Prosor**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative